


Environmental Stress and Demographic Change Contributing to an Insurgency and Reflection on the ongoing Peace Process in Nepal

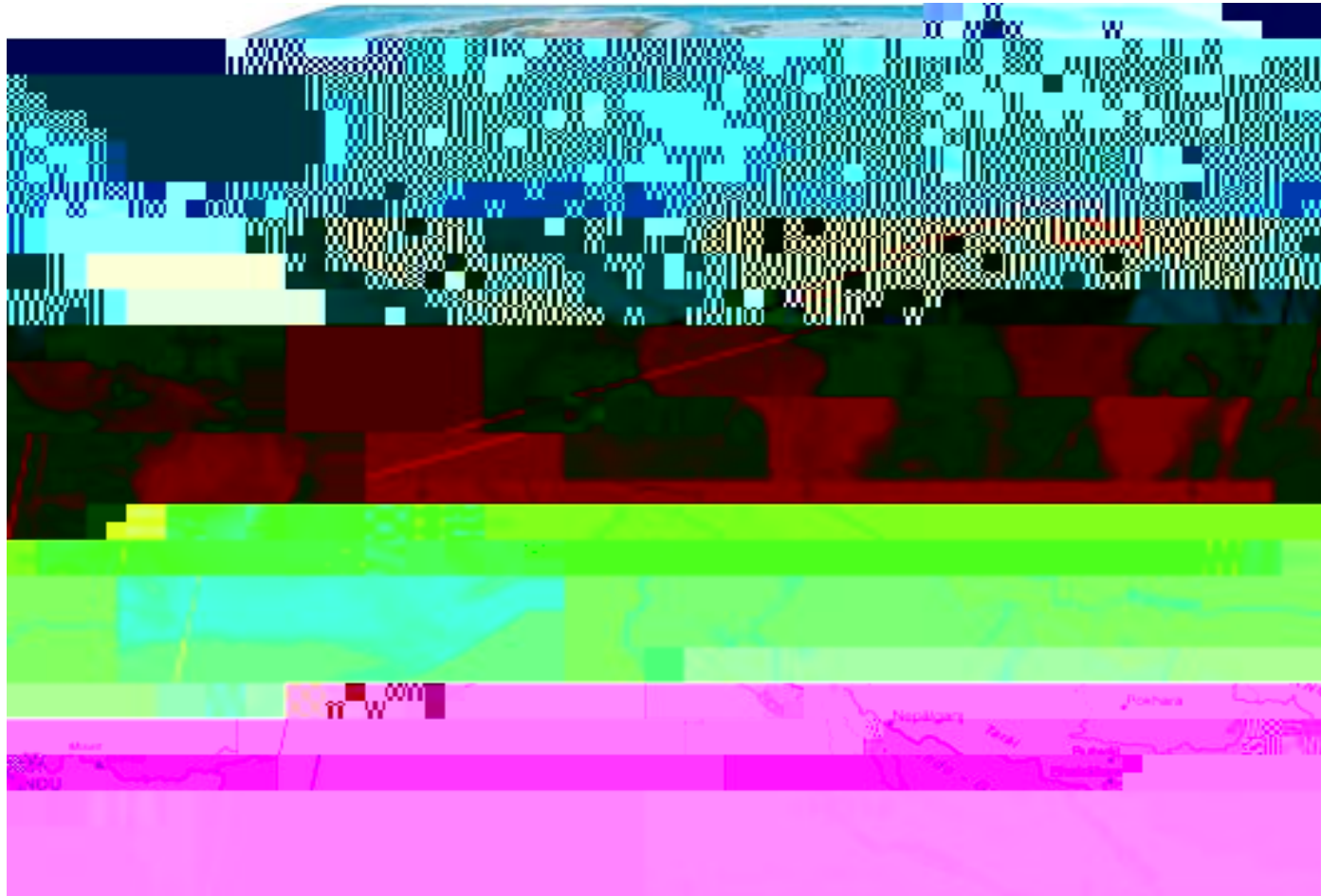


**Richard Matthew
University of California Irvine**

**Bishnu Raj Upreti
Swiss National Center of Competence in Research, North-South, South Asia
Regional Coordination Office, Nepal**

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Map of Nepal



Basic Data about Nepal

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Background to Conflict

- ;**1846-1950 ruled by the Rana dynasty**
- ;**1950 Ranas overthrown by pro-democracy forces from the influence of events in India**
- ;**1950-62 multi-party democracy**
- ;**1962: Party-less**

The Context

- ∅ **Situation of States within the State.**
- ∅ **> 75 % area under Rebels**
- ∅ **NR, especially land became fundamental issue for Rebels**
- ∅ **RN: Source of economy to wage war**
- ∅ **Government/parties used insurgency as means to grab power**
- ∅ **Nepal has experienced a 5-fold growth in population in less than a century, placing enormous stress on its modest natural resource base and its subsistence agricultural economy**
- i **These stressful conditions undergird a decade of insurgency**
- i **Big question remains unanswered yet:**
 - › **Can a sustainable peace--that is, a peace informed by ecological limits, economic and social justice, and political inclusiveness—be implemented before the country becomes a failed state?**

A Conflict of Grievance than Greed

- i **The conflict reflects grievances over:**
 - › **Very deep and persistent economic and social inequalities**
 - › **Lack of political inclusiveness**
 - › **Perception of government as corrupt, and biased towards Kathmandu and elites**
 - › **Vulnerable status of women**
 - › **Vulnerable status of indigenous peoples**
- i **Effects of war include human rights violations; over 13,000 killed; significant economic losses**

Specific causes of conflict

- ∅ **Skewed distribution of land and other resources (80:20)**
- ∅ **Poverty and unemployment**
- ∅ **Irrational exploitation of NR**
- ∅ **Discrimination, exclusion and geographical isolation**
- ∅ **Monopolisation of national politics and governance failure**
- ∅ **Absence of a vibrant civil society**
- ∅ **Absence of non-violent mechanisms to manage differences**
- ∅ **Strategy and tactics of warring parties**
- ∅ **Culture of denial and resistance to change**
- ∅ **Legal causes (e.g., constitution protecting Hindu religion)**
- ∅ **Ideological cause**
- i **Population and environmental factors have not received adequate attention in Nepal**
- i **They create underlying conditions conducive to conflict that must be addressed as part of a sustainable peace process**

Key Players



Nepal Army



**Monarchists
and monarchy**



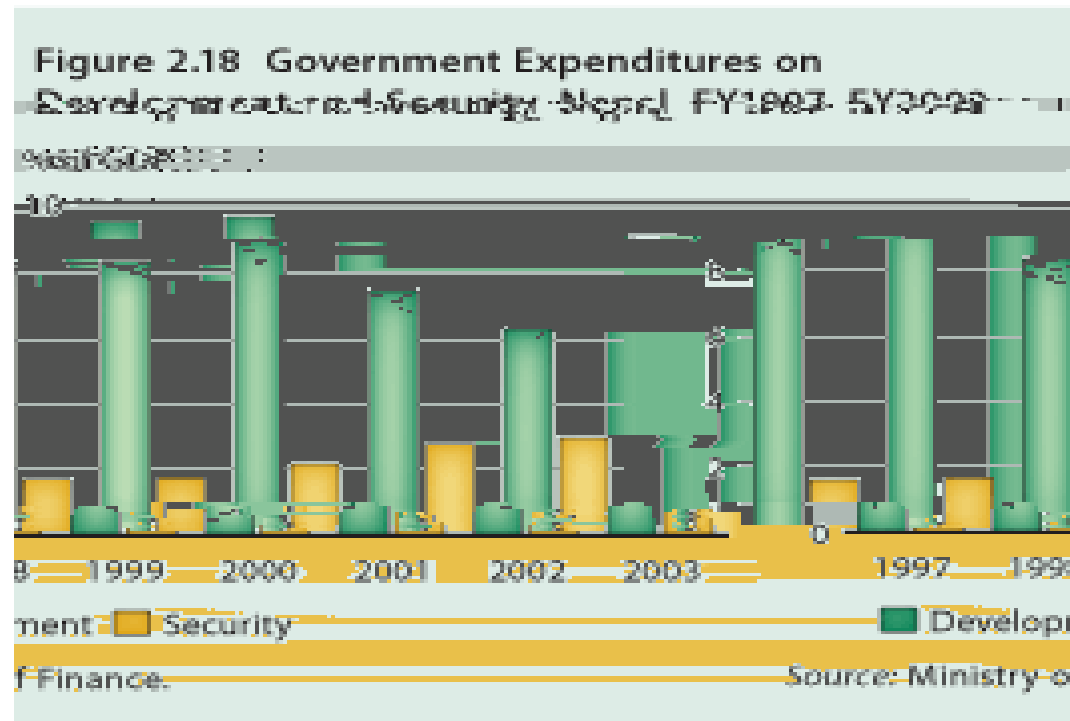
Political parties



Maoists



Shifting Priorities



Population Data (2001 census)

- i 40% under age 15**
- i Median age is 20.1 (26 globally)**
- i Population growth rate is 2.25%**
- i Female fertility rate is 4.1**
- i Almost half of the population lives in the terai (17% of land); prospects for development of other bioregions are small**
- i Population density has increased from 38.3 to 157.3 people/km² in a century**
- i 200,000-300,000 IDPs**

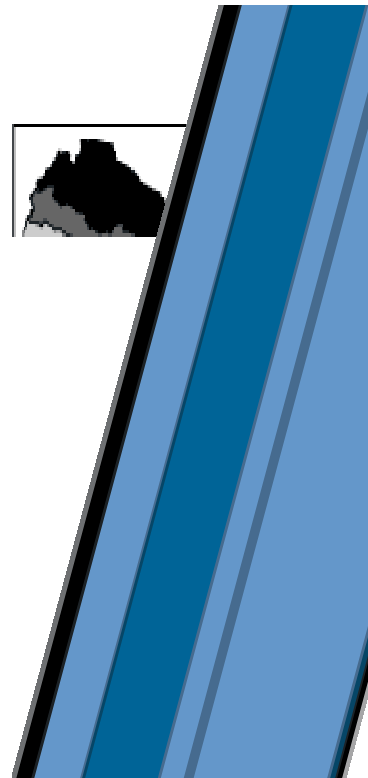
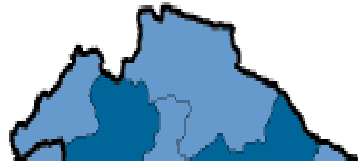
Population Pyramid

MALE **Nepal: 2006** FEMALES



Population Growth by Bioregion

Percent increase in population



Environmental Factors

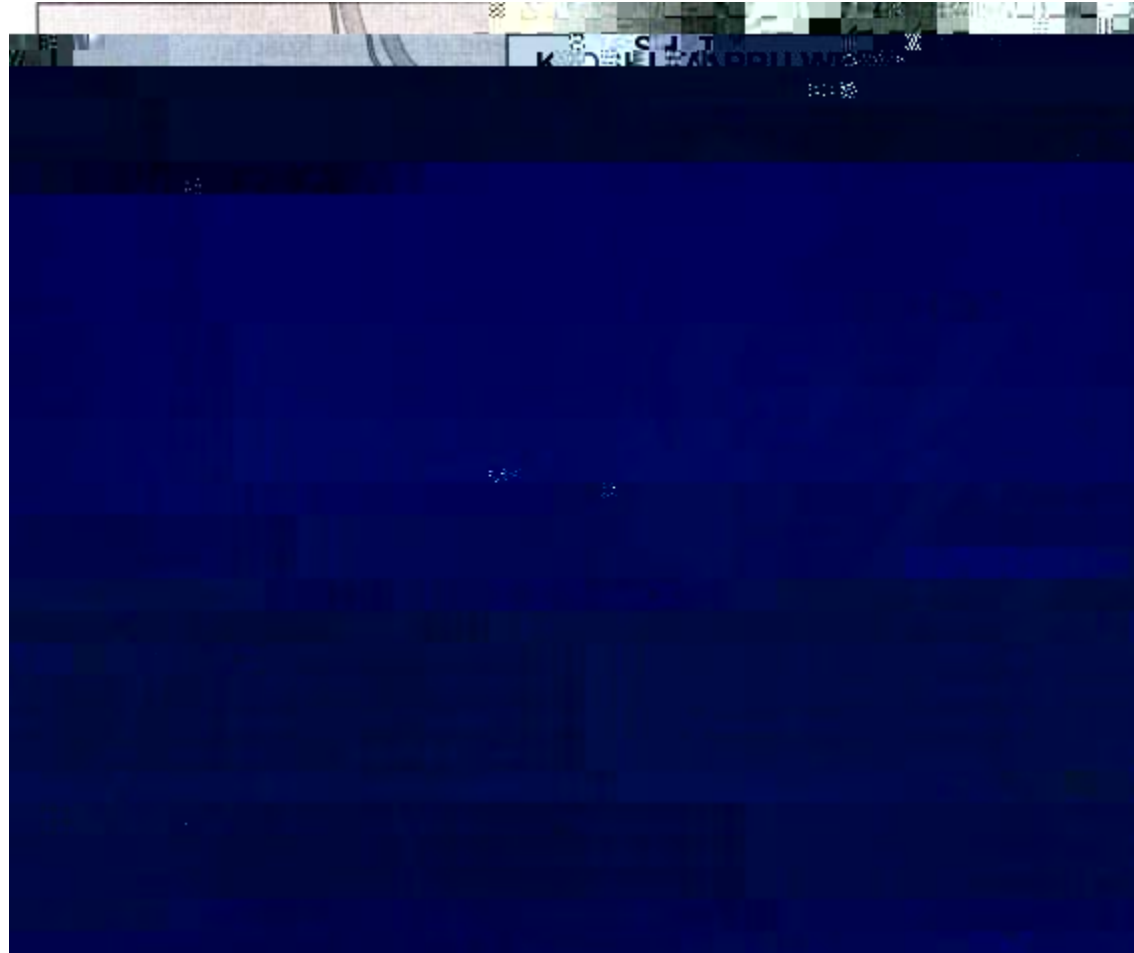
- i **20% of land arable; 78% of population depends on agriculture**
- i **Land scarcity is a serious issue compounded by 20% o;nds**

Overview of complications and conflict over Natural Resources/Environment

| Issues | State position | Maoists position |
|--------|---|---|
| Land | Property rights legally guaranteed but weak in practice | Seizing of lands off landlords and absentee landlords, no property rights granted in natural resources, La8m (La |



Koshi Tappu Reserve



Case Study: Koshi Tappu

i **Problems:**

- › **People did not benefit from dam construction**
- › **Migration into area has continued**
- › **Little or no compensation as area was protected**
- › **Reserve wardens have introduced corrupt practices**
- › **People have used resources illegally facing fines**

i **As in other protected areas of Nepal, the Maoists have sought to mobilize support by promising to restore access to the wetland resources (e.g. water, trees, fish, grasses)**

Examples of specific impacts on natural resources and bio-diversity

- Users Groups are not allowed to harvest in their forests. Government staff are confined in district headquarters.
- Military took office buildings
- Disturbance on estimated annual transaction of around 2.5 billion rupees from approximately 166 types of mountain medical herbs,
- Irrational exploitation of the expensive medical herbs e.g., *Yarsagumba* (*Cordyceps sinensis*), *Chiraito* (*Swertia Chiraita*), *Jatamasi* (*Nardostachys grandiflora*), *Kutki* (*Picrorhiza scrophulariiflora*), *Bikhama* (*Aconitum palmatum*), *padamchal* (*Rheum emodi*), *Panchaunle* (*Galearis stracheyi*), *Sunpati* (*Rhododendron anthopogon*), *Sughandhawal* (*Valerina wallichii*), etc. by smugglers by paying tax to the insurgents
- State is not able to regulate and control NR, they are controlled by Maoists.



Photo:Knut-Erik Helle



Nepal: From Civil War to Sustainable Peace? Review of Nepal's Peace Process

- i Seven Parties Alliance (SPA) and CPN (Maoist) signed a 12 Point Understanding on 22 Nov, 2005.**
- i SPA declared a Non-violent peaceful Movement on 6 April, 2006 against the autocratic rule of the king (1st February 2006 took over) and Maoist declared to support the movement in a peaceful manner.**
- i Royal address of April 21, 2006 asked the SPA to form the government. SPA rejected the Royal offer.**
- i The 19 days peaceful and Non-violent Movement turned successful on 24 April, 2006 when king surrendered with people's power, fulfilling the demands of protesters by reinstating the House of the Representative, handing over the ceased power, and recognizing the sovereignty of people.**

Peace Process continue...

- i **Ceasefire continued since 26 April 2006**
- i **The reinstated House of Representative unanimously passed the motion of Constitutional Assembly on 30 April, 2006.**
- i

Peace Process continue...

- i **Intense negotiation going on**
 - › On the position of Monarchy (decision by CA v/s referendum, suspension of the king at present)
 - › Separation of arms from Maoists before power sharing arrangement with them in interim government
 - › Interim Parliament
 - › Modality of the structure of the state (federal, decentralised, etc.)
 - › Security sector restructuring
 - › Procedures on holding Constituent Assembly Election in June 2007 (numbers of members, mode of constituency, etc.)

Conclusions

- i A large pool of undereducated and underemployed youth in Nepal have now experienced ten years of brutal conflict, addressing their concerns is major challenge**
- i Previous attempts at economic and political reform in Nepal have not provided much opportunity to these growing and discontented groups**
- i As the environment degrades, and the population continues to grow, the prospects for a sustainable peace decline.**



Conclusions ...

§ **Success of peace process mainly depends upon the willingness of major political parties to fundamentally restructure the feudal, top-down exclusionary state into a modern inclusive one**

§



Signs of Hope: People's willingness and cooperation



Signs of Hope: Potentials of Terai



Signs of Hope : Potentials of Mountains

